

In 1941, they had moved to Juneau, and they encountered a level of discrimination in that community against Alaska Native peoples that, as we look at the accounts of the time, paralleled the Jim Crow practices in the South, but it strengthened their resolve. It strengthened their commitment to fight back against the discrimination that they saw.

Through their work with ANB and ANS, Elizabeth and Roy began advocating for an antidiscrimination bill in the Territorial legislature. If you will recall, we didn't become a State until 1959. This is the early forties, and they are talking about an antidiscrimination bill in our legislature. They pointed out to all who would listen that Alaska Natives were paying taxes for a public school system that excluded their children. They weren't part of that school system. They pointed out that Alaska Native men were fighting in World War II, but then on their return, they were denied rights that other veterans enjoyed.

Those fundamental discriminations and many more were what drove their pursuit for equal rights not just for Alaska Natives but for all people in Alaska.

So they had gone to Juneau in 1941. That antidiscrimination bill didn't pass immediately. It was reintroduced in 1945. And there is a lot of discussion about the pivotal moment in time when eyes were opened and, really, minds were also opened in awareness.

This was the time of debate where this antidiscrimination bill had passed the house, had moved over to the senate, and there was a Territorial senator who denounced these efforts to desegregate, and he stood up on the senate floor, and he said:

Who are these people, barely out of savagery, who want to associate with us whites, with 5,000 years of recorded civilization behind us?

Pretty inflammatory if you are sitting there in those Senate chambers listening to that, certainly—certainly—to an Alaska Native person.

At the end of the debate, the public was offered a chance to express their views in front of the legislature. That is not something that you have happen in most legislatures. We don't have it in our legislature now, but in our Territorial legislature, the public was offered a chance to weigh in here.

And Elizabeth Peratrovich stood in the back of this senate gallery, and in her remarks, she said:

I would not have expected that I, who am "barely out of savagery," would have to remind the gentleman with 5,000 years of recorded civilization behind them of our Bill of Rights.

And when asked if she thought that the bill would eliminate discrimination, she replied:

Do your laws against larceny and even murder prevent those crimes? No law will eliminate crimes, but at least you as legislators can assert to the world that you recognize the evil of the present situation and

speak your intent to help us overcome discrimination.

Imagine this scene. You are part of this legislative body, and from the back of the gallery, a Native woman stands to speak to address this elected body.

Following her comments, there was a long period of silence, and then there was applause through the gallery and through the senate floor, including from some who had previously opposed the bill.

Alaska's Governor at the time, Ernest Gruening, went on to sign the antidiscrimination act, the Nation's first antidiscrimination act, signed into law on February 16, 1945. This was almost two decades before the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964.

So it is something that when we in Alaska think about the history of discrimination that we have had, that certainly Alaska Native people have endured—endured far too long—to have led the country in terms of putting into law the first antidiscrimination act in this country a couple decades before the Civil Rights Act advanced through this Congress.

During an Indian Affairs Committee hearing on Native voting access last October, the president of the Alaska Federation Natives, Julie Kitka, reminded us that these events are not very old, and sometimes we think of Elizabeth Peratrovich as part of our history, but she, Elizabeth, and her husband Roy, and the impact that they had on Alaska and the way that they strengthened our democracy is our current history as well.

So we honor Elizabeth Peratrovich's legacy of standing up for what is right. She is an inspiration because she set the example that when you see something wrong, you speak out and you do something about it.

And she also provided a great example for why we need to listen—why we need to listen to all perspectives and voices, especially those who have been left out or left behind, oftentimes intentionally.

I think of Stella Martin of Kake, AK, a champion of equal rights herself. She described Elizabeth Peratrovich as "a fighter with velvet gloves." And she was truly a fighter. Elizabeth Peratrovich Day is also a timely reminder for those of us here in the U.S. Senate. We all have an obligation to respond to the calls from our constituents who are seeking protection, including through electoral reforms and improvements for voter access.

We all know that we went through a very partisan exercise on voting rights legislation here on the floor earlier this year. Some may say it is hard to see how that advanced the debate on this issue; but it didn't change the underlying fact that we do need to come together to advance good solid policy in this area. I am working with a group of Senators. There are around 16 of us, I think, total. But we are continuing to focus on these issues of election re-

form. We want to try to determine a bipartisan path forward so that we can actually move important safeguards and clarifications into the law. And it may not be easy to take on some of these complicated issues, particularly when you get the pulls from both sides to not engage to try to come to the middle. But like we did with the infrastructure bill, like we are doing with the Violence Against Women Act, we need to follow a path that allows us to get some things done as opposed to simply sending messages.

As Alaska celebrates Elizabeth Peratrovich, I hope the Senate will look to her legacy for inspiration as we seek unity and follow her example of treating our fellow citizens with respect. We have got too much at stake to operate in any other lesser manner.

I thank the Presiding Officer for his attention.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session to be in a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ANNIVERSARY OF PROTESTS IN BAHRAIN

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, it has been 11 years since the people of Bahrain gathered in the streets of Manama to urge their leaders to grant them stronger economic, social, and human rights. Bahrainis of all backgrounds called upon their leaders for meaningful change, for a voice at the table in the matters that affected their everyday lives. But their activism was met with brutal repression from the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Journalists and human rights activists have shared with the world how Bahrain's national security forces violently beat unarmed protestors in the crowds, severely injuring and even killing protestors with tear gas, rubber bullets, and other live ammunition. The forces arbitrarily arrested and detained journalists, pursued volunteers who were helping the injured, and spared no one, not even children. This anniversary is stained by the blood of the Bahraini people, and it pains me that despite over a decade of asking for